

CHAPTER ONE

I hate mail.

By Aidan F.

“Hey! what’s up loser! Get over here!” “Tim, just walk away.” Brody continued, “Hey! , I told you to get over here!” Daniel started to walk away, I followed. Not too long after we started walking, Daniel was punched in the back. He fell to the ground gasping for air. “Next time, it’ll be both of y’all!” “Back off!” I yelled. Daniel got up and yelled back at him, and after that we both walked home.

School had been out for a week now, and word was getting out that boys all over were getting drafted into the military to fight in the war. It frightened me that all it took to be called to go to war was a simple letter. But Daniel and I both vowed to each other that if only one of us got the draft card, the other brother would volunteer.

We got home to the smell of dinner in the oven, twenty minutes later we were sitting down at the table eating. I helped Daniel to some beans,

“Thanks” he said. “Everyone is off to this crazy war of ours. Not most will come back.” Pop said, “Stop! No war-talk at the dinner table!” Mom yelled. The table went quiet. “But ma’ we gotta be talking about this stuff. What happens if Tim or I get drafted? We both already have a plan, we’re gonna volunteer for each other if only one of us gets picked.” “Are you boys crazy!” Pop yelled,” “Well we have to help out our country somehow, and I'm not going back to the mill!” I yelled back. Mom just looked down at her plate, I could see a tear running down her cheek. We continued eating until Daniel got up and asked everybody for the plates. He went to the kitchen with Ma and began cleaning up. “War....it’s...not what you boys think it is. Killing the enemy is not what it looks like on those cartoons. The enemy may be the enemy, but they are real living people who have a family,” Pop said quietly to me. “I understand.” I replied.

After dinner Daniel and I went down to the docks. “What were you and Pop talking about after dinner?” “He just wanted us to know war is not what we think it is, you know him giving advice from World War One. He still thinks today's war is as easy as yesterday's Battle.” “Yeah.” Daniel replied,” You know, we could get it. We could have gotten the letter already, what if it's in the mail right now. What if we have to go. What if w-”

“SHUT UP!” I yelled, “We’re not going to be picked! You keep talking about, why don’t you go down the recruitment office and sign-up! Go, do it! You seem to want to!” “I’m, sorry I didn-” “STOP! Shut up!” Daniel sighed, I walked home alone.

When I got home, there were no letters. I went up to my room and into bed. I drifted off peacefully. When I woke up the next morning I heard Mom crying so I ran down to see what the problem was. As I was running the thought ran through my head, *what if we got the letter?* I made it down, Pop told me that my best friend Steven got a draft card in the mail. I ran straight out the door, relieved Daniel or I didn’t get the a draft card, but devastated that Steven did. I ran to his house across the street, threw the door open, and saw Steven at the table with a bunch of bills, letters, and cards. His mail. But he held one letter in his hand as he began to cry. I hugged him tight not wanting to let him go. I convinced him to go on a walk to talk stuff through.

“So I guess that's that, I'm going off to war, probably not coming back. I hate the military.” “Don’t say that! You will be coming back...because...I'm signing up to go with

you!" I said happily! "WHAT! What if your mom finds out or your pa!" "They won't until I have to go" "You can't sign up, you have to stay here, date Emily Green like you've said a million times you would!" Steven yelled back, "I know bu-" NO, if you go and get yourself killed, how will you marry her then, Hu?" "I don't care, I'm enlisting today, in fact that's exactly where we're walking to." "Thanks," he finally said, and we were both off to the Recruitment office.

When, I finally came home, I didn't tell Mom, I just handed her a box of fabric I saw at the shop and went to Daniel's room to tell him. "YOU DID WHAT!?" He screamed "I had to, I couldn't let him go alone!" I yelled. "You make being your older brother HARD!!" He ran down the stairs and out the door. I didn't hear him get on his bike, which is what he always does. I went downstairs to see what he was doing. I looked outside and saw him hugging Mom and crying. I thought, *YOU TOLD HER!!!* but instead I walked out and asked what was wrong. He looked at me over Mom's shoulder and tossed me an envelope, inside was a letter and a card- a draft card. I fell to my knees, I don't know why...hadn't I already enlisted? But then it hit me like the punch Brody gave Daniel, this was Daniel's draft card, not mine.